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widths and said lengths, one of said at least two interlock slots of each of said laminae disposed near each of said narrow ends.

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40. (Amended) An elongate stack of interlocked laminae comprising:
a first elongate, rectangular, slender, relatively flexible, planar, lamina having at least two first interlock elements, said first lamina having first and second generally opposed edges defining the narrow ends of said rectangular first lamina in a first direction of said stack and having third and fourth generally opposed edges defining the other ends of the first lamina in a second direction of said stack, said first lamina having a length and a first width, one of said at least two first interlock elements being disposed near each of said narrow ends;

a second elongate, rectangular, slender, relatively flexible, planar, lamina having at least two second interlock elements interlocked in an interference fit with said at least two first interlock elements, said second lamina having first and second generally opposed edges defining the narrow ends of said second lamina in said first direction of said stack, one of said at least two second interlock elements being disposed near each of said narrow ends, the second lamina having a length equal to the length of said first lamina and a second width which is different from said first width, said first edges of said first and second laminae aligned to define a substantially planar surface of said stack, said substantially planar surface provided with a groove which is substantially perpendicular to said first and second directions, said second lamina having third and fourth generally opposed edges defining the ends of said second lamina in said second direction of said stack, one of said third and fourth edges of said first lamina not aligned with said third and fourth edges of said second lamina.

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43. (Amended) An elongate stack, said stack formed by a process comprising:
providing a die assembly having means for guiding strip stock material through the die assembly, stamping means and a choke passageway having one of a notch and a protrusion;

stamping a first said lamina in the strip stock material;
stamping at least two interlock slots in the first lamina;
stamping one of a notch and a protrusion in a narrow end of the first lamina;
separating the first lamina from the strip stock material;
placing the first lamina into the choke passageway;
engaging one of said notch and said protrusion of the first lamina with respectively one of said protrusion and said notch of the choke passageway and guiding said first lamina into a first stacked position;

stamping a second said lamina in the strip stock material;
stamping at least two interlock tabs in the second lamina;

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stamping one of a notch and a protrusion in a narrow end of the second lamina;

placing the second lamina into the choke passageway;

engaging one of said notch and said protrusion of the second lamina with respectively one of said protrusion and said notch of the choke passageway and guiding said second lamina onto said first lamina;

at least partially engaging the first said interlock slot and said first interlock tab; and

separating the second lamina from the strip stock material; and

wherein said stack is an elongate cylindrical stack of laminae having a substantially cylindrical cross-section and said laminae each being interlocked with an adjacent one of said laminae and having a rectangular shape defining a width and a length, said rectangular shape further defining said narrow ends, said length of each said lamina being substantially greater than its said width, said first lamina being the widest of all laminae in said stack, said second lamina width being less than said first lamina width, said lengths of all said laminae being substantially identical, said stack having a substantially planar surface defined by said narrow ends of said laminae, said planar surface including said one of a groove and a ridge which extends substantially perpendicular to said widths and said lengths and wherein one of said at least two interlock slots of said first lamina and one of said at least two interlock tabs of said second lamina are disposed near each of said narrow ends of said first and second laminae respectively.

REMARKS

Claims 36-44 are pending in the current application. Claims 36-44 have been rejected in an Office Action mailed July 1, 2002. Claims 36, 40 and 43 have been amended hereby.

The Examiner has rejected claims 36, 37, and 40-44 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Konda et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,632,259), Gutmann (U.S. Pat. No. 5,77,480) and Merlano (U.S. Pat. No. 5,671,526). The Examiner has also rejected product by process claims 43 and 44 by referencing the product discussed in his rejection of claims 36, 37 and 40-44.

As amended, independent claim 36, and claims 37-39 which depend therefrom, call for an elongate cylindrical stack of laminae having a substantially circular cross section which includes at least one first lamina and at least one second lamina, each laminae having a rectangular shape defining a narrow end, each laminae including at least two interlock slots and each laminae, except for one of the top or bottom lamina, having at least two interlock